

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim 7 without prejudice. Please amend the following claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims

1. (**Currently Amended**) A lithographic printing member comprising:

a base layer;

a laser-absorbing layer over said base layer, wherein said laser-absorbing layer is has a gradient solid dispersion of metal and metal-oxide, forming varying areas such that concentration ratios ~~between the~~ of the metal and the metal-oxide ~~vary~~ throughout a thickness of said laser-absorbing layer, wherein the concentration ratio of the metal to metal oxide within the laser-absorbing layer is higher than the concentration ratio of the metal to metal oxide at both edges of the laser-absorbing layer so that less laser energy is needed for ablating the laser-absorbing layer than what would be needed for ablating a laser-absorbing layer without a gradient of concentration ratios; and

a coating layer over said laser-absorbing layer, said coating layer and said base layer having different affinities for ink,

wherein said printing member is capable of being imaged such that selective areas of said coating layer and of said laser-absorbing layer are removed to expose said base layer.

2. (Original) The printing member of claim 1, wherein the metal is aluminum and the metal-oxide is aluminum-oxide.
3. (Currently Amended) The printing member of claim 1, wherein at least some ~~of the metal-oxide~~ areas within the laser-absorbing layer have a non-stoichiometric ratio between the metal of the metal-oxide and the oxygen such that there are more metal atoms than the stoichiometric ratio.
4. (Original) The printing member of claim 3, wherein the non-stoichiometric ratio varies throughout the thickness of said laser-absorbing layer.
5. (Currently Amended) The printing member of claim 4, wherein the non-stoichiometric ratio is ~~higher in proximity to said base layer than in proximity to said coating layer~~ bi-directional.
6. (Original) The printing member of claim 1, wherein the thickness of said laser-absorbing layer is in the range between 0.02 to 0.6 microns.
7. (Canceled).
8. (Original) The printing member of claim 1, wherein said coating layer is an ink-repelling layer.

9. (Original) The printing member of claim 1, wherein said coating layer comprises an ultraviolet curable material.
10. (Original) The printing member of claim 1 further comprising:
a form film over said coating layer.
11. (Original) The printing member of claim 10, wherein said form film is a polymeric film with low surface energy.
12. (Original) The printing member of claim 1 further comprising:
a primer layer over said laser-absorbing layer.
- 13 - 23. (Canceled)
24. (Previously Presented) The printing member of claim 1, wherein said base layer comprises ink-accepting oleophilic properties.
25. (Previously Presented) The printing member of claim 1, wherein said base layer comprises polyvinylchloride, polycarbonate or polyethylene terephthalate.
26. (Previously Presented) The printing member of claim 1, wherein said coating layer comprises silicone epoxy oligomer or silicone acrylate oligomer.
27. (Canceled)